

## CRITICAL REVIEW

**TÜFEKÇİ, ÖZGÜR & DAĞ, RAHMAN (ED) (2022). *TRENDS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN WORLD POLITICS*. LANHAM: LEXINGTON BOOKS, ISBN: 9781793650238**

**FEVZI KIRBAŞOĞLU**

[fkirbasoglu@ktu.edu.tr](mailto:fkirbasoglu@ktu.edu.tr)

Research Assistant of the International Relations Department at Karadeniz Technical University (Türkiye). He received MA degree in 2019 from the International Relations Department of KTU, with a thesis entitled "The EU's Response to Rising Powers: The Case of Turkey". In the same year, he started his doctoral studies in the field of International Security and Terrorism under the Council of Higher Education's (CoHE) prestigious 100/2000 PhD Scholarship Program. His current research interests include EU Law and Institutions, European Political Integration, and the geopolitical dynamics of the Black Sea region. <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8797-4750>.

The book *Trends and Transformations in World Politics*, edited by Özgür Tüfekçi, Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at Karadeniz Technical University in Türkiye, and Rahman Dağ, Associate Professor in the Department of Economy Politics of the Middle East at Marmara University in Türkiye, examines the fundamental changes in the post-Cold War international system. The book discusses these transformations in the context of unilateralism, multilateralism and the new world order and analyses their impacts on states, international organizations and regional dynamics (pp. 1-4).

The book consists of introduction and two main parts. The first part includes six chapter: structural changes in the post-Cold War era, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) need for transformation, the complex relationship between national sovereignty and intervention, Russian foreign policy, China's contribution to the multipolar world order through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and global governance issues. The second part examines the fundamental trends and transformations in world politics from the perspectives of prominent International Relations (IR) scholars.

Richard Sakwa opens the first section by arguing that the post-Cold War period initially manifested as a *cold peace*, before transitioning into what he terms a *Second Cold War* from 2014 onwards (pp. 30-33, 41-43). According to Sakwa, this new era began with the challenge posed by neorevisionist states such as Russia and China to the liberal international order led by the United States. Furthermore, Sakwa predicts that this period will continue for a long time in a more complex and multipolar structure (pp. 31-33).

The second chapter, entitled *NATO–The Urgent Need for Adaptation (Again) in a Changing World: Revitalization of Political Dimension, Southern Flank, and China Factor*, Luis Tomé analyses the necessity for NATO to adapt to evolving geopolitical



circumstances and emerging strategic threats. Tomé asserts that for NATO to respond effectively to the complex geopolitical and security challenges of the present era, it must revitalise its political dimension (pp. 48–57). Tomé posits that while NATO has successfully adapted to threats on its eastern flank, primarily focused on Russia, it has exhibited strategic weakness on its southern flank (pp. 57–63). In particular, the ascendance of China, as evidenced by initiatives such as the BRI, is identified as a novel and substantial challenge for NATO, underscoring the necessity for the alliance to adapt to the dynamics of global competition (pp. 63–66, 71).

The third chapter, entitled *Effect of Cases on the Rivalry Between National Sovereignty and Intervention* addresses the equilibrium between state sovereignty and interventions undertaken for the protection of human rights within the context of international law and norms (pp. 81–82). In order to examine this topic further, Ekrem Ok and Tüfekçi analyse three case studies: Libya, Syria and Iraq (pp. 88–90, 91–92). Ekrem Ok and Tüfekçi illustrate that the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention is contingent upon the outcomes achieved. The success of intervention efforts tends to validate the policies of intervention, whereas unsuccessful operations serve to reinforce arguments against such actions (pp. 82–84; 89–91). Ok and Tüfekçi observe that the developments in Iraq and Libya have considerably eroded confidence in the concept of humanitarian intervention. Nevertheless, they contend that it cannot be wholly condemned as unlawful or illegitimate and that each instance must be assessed on its own merits (pp. 85–87).

The fourth chapter, entitled *The Bear has Taken the Honey: Predictability of Putin's Russia* examines the role of Russia under Vladimir Putin's leadership in world politics and its predictability (p. 99). Sónia Sénica's analysis focuses on the relationship between Russia's domestic political dynamics and its foreign policy, examining the manner in which Putin's personal leadership style contributes to this predictability. Sénica posits that foreign policy is shaped not only by the pressures of the international system but also by domestic political structures, national interests and the perceptions of leaders. Sénica presents the Ukraine crisis and the intervention in Syria as concrete examples of Russia's efforts to assert itself on the international stage by using its military and diplomatic power, while also securing domestic political legitimacy (p. 101). The chapter concludes that Putin's foreign policy decisions, fundamentally driven by the ambition to restore Russia's great power status, follow a largely predictable trajectory (p. 100).

The fifth chapter, entitled *How Eurasian Integration of China's Belt and Road Initiative Defends a Multipolar World Order*, examines the ways in which China's involvement in Eurasia through the BRI is employed to establish and safeguard a multipolar world order (p. 117). Andrew K.P. Leung posits that BRI represents a component of China's strategy to consolidate its economic and geopolitical power and accelerate the transition to a multipolar world order (p. 123). This initiative enables China to assume a pivotal role in global supply chains while simultaneously deepening its collaboration with Eurasian partners, particularly Russia. This serves to counterbalance the influence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region (pp. 117, 123, 131). Furthermore, Leung asserts that through this initiative, China aims to enhance its global influence and attract developing countries to its side, thereby contributing to global economic growth. However, it is also emphasised that China's initiative has prompted a counterreaction in the West,



particularly in the United States, manifested as the *China scare*, which could potentially have a detrimental impact on China's global image in the future (pp. 117-119).

The sixth chapter, entitled *Whither Global Governance? An Approach to the World Politics*, the concept of global governance and its role in world politics are addressed. Tüfekçi and Dağ examine the role of global governance in world politics and evaluate the efficacy of international cooperation mechanisms in addressing global issues. Although Tüfekçi and Dağ recognise the value of global governance as a means of addressing international issues, they highlight the limitations of the current system, in which states, reluctant to relinquish their sovereignty, continue to exert significant influence (pp. 137, 140-141). Consequently, Tüfekçi and Dağ posit that in order to more effectively address international issues through mechanisms that are more inclusive, transparent and cooperative, it is necessary for states to reassess their understanding of sovereignty and for international organisations to undergo reform (pp. 145-148).

The second part of the book, entitled *Trends and Transformation in World Politics through the Eyes of the Leading IR Scholars*, comprises interviews with seventeen distinguished scholars in the field of IR. The interviews provide invaluable insights into the manner in which contemporary global events, including the advent of the COVID-19, the resurgence of populism and the movement of refugees, are influencing the evolution of IR theories. This section is notable for its presentation of multiple theoretical perspectives, its exploration of the relationship between theory and practice and its focus on current global issues. In terms of the multiple theoretical perspectives, Andrew Linklater draws on Norbert Elias' analysis of the civilising process to discuss the ethical foundations of the post-Westphalian era and the potential transformation of international society. This enables him to highlight the complex relationship between normative ideals and power dynamics (p. 154). From a realist perspective, Michael C. Williams reevaluates the concept of security, emphasising the commonalities between classical realism and constructivism (pp. 206-207). Andrew Moravcsik, from the perspective of liberal intergovernmentalism, emphasises the success of the European Union (EU) and the importance of economic interaction in international politics (pp. 157-158). Anssi Paasi's geographical perspective explores different interpretations of regionalism and the shift of power from the West to the East (pp. 163, 165). The relationship between IR theories and practical occurrences is clearly discernible in Katharyne Mitchell's interview. Mitchell addresses the rise of populism and its impact on both local and international politics, integrating concepts of space, identity and neoliberal citizenship to derive more concrete conclusions (p. 185). From a constructivist perspective, Knud Erik Jørgensen examines the EU's external relations and the future of multilateralism (pp. 191-192), while Nicholas Onuf emphasises the importance of rules and rule-making processes, elucidating how these processes shape the behaviour of states and other actors (pp. 213-214). In Peter M. Haas's interview, the role of epistemic communities in international politics and the United States' approach to environmental issues are discussed (p. 222). This section also assesses the efficacy of IR theories in explaining contemporary global developments. Ira William Zartman employs the concepts of hurting stalemates and ripe moments to highlight the difficulties inherent in conflict resolution in a multipolar world (p. 175). In his study of post-Soviet conflicts, Gerard Toal analyses Russia's interventions in neighbouring countries and the impact of these interventions on regional dynamics (p. 179). Joseph Nye, through the concept of soft power, examines the changing nature of



the United States' influence in the international arena and the importance of multilateralism (p. 183).

The conclusion chapter, the perspectives of IR theorists are presented, with a particular focus on the transformation process of world politics and the inherent complexity of international relations (p. 269). The chapter commences with Nardin's argument concerning the shortcomings of the discipline of IR, which is then followed by Weiss's analysis of the multipolar world system and the dynamics of power struggles (pp. 269–270). At this point, Onuf underscores the significance of rules and institutions, highlighting the shortcomings of capitalism and the rise in social unrest. Moravcsik's underestimation of the impact of populist movements is offset by Mitchell's cautionary note regarding the ascendance of such movements (pp. 271, 275). This is reinforced by Linklater's examination of normative domains and power relations, as well as Haggard's emphasis on institutional stability for economic development. In the subsequent analysis, Sakwa presents an examination of China's distinctive worldview and its cooperation with other developing countries (p. 272). This is followed by a discussion by Zartman, Toal and Jervis, who highlight the rise of political disorder and conflicts. Dalby's environmental security analysis emphasises the environmental impact of human-state relations, while Paasi examines the relationships between borders, regions and identity (pp. 273–274). The perspectives of Moravčik and Nye on the importance of interdependence and multilateralism (p. 275) are reinforced by Jervis and Haggard's analyses on nuclear proliferation (pp. 276–277). Jørgensen and Haas's evaluations of the role of international institutions and epistemic communities in global governance (p. 277) expand the scope of the study. In conclusion, Williams identifies the challenges facing the liberal international order, while Onuf emphasises the need for alternative rules and institutions, and Sakwa highlights the potential of alternative models of international politics (pp. 278–279), thereby demonstrating the complex and multidimensional structure of contemporary world politics.

*Trends and Transformations in World Politics* represents a noteworthy addition to the field of IR, particularly in terms of its emphasis on contemporary political developments. The book presents a more nuanced analysis of the post-Cold War world order than is typically found in existing literature, offering a reconsideration of concepts such as the multipolar world order and regionalism. It is noteworthy that the remainder of concepts, including *the second and multipolar Cold War* and *the age of regionalism* (pp. 1, 29–42), offer novel insights for understanding the changes in world politics. In this context, the book can be situated within the existing literature on similar topics. To illustrate, a comparison with Shannon L. Blanton and Charles W. Kegley's *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*: In their book, Blanton and Kegley provide a comprehensive examination of traditional topics within the field of IR, including world politics, relations between great powers, globalisation, human rights and the environment. However, Tüfekçi and Dağ extend beyond a more analysis of the current state of IR, combining the insights of numerous scholars to investigate prospective future developments and transformations. This distinguishes their work from the static approach characteristic of the aforementioned book. Furthermore, *Trends and Transformations in World Politics* is more comprehensive than the traditional approaches found in other works such as *The Globalization of World Politics* and *The Global Transformation*, which address the core concepts and historical development of the IR discipline in a thorough manner. In



contrast, this book concentrates on contemporary developments and systemic transformations. In addition, it examines the role of rising powers and the transition to a multipolar world order, offering a global perspective that diverges from traditional Western-centric approaches and filling gaps in the existing literature. In conclusion, the section of the book that features the views of distinguished scholars in the field of IR offers a distinctive perspective that synthesises theoretical discourse with contemporary developments. This approach reflects an endeavour to bridge the gap between academic literature and practical politics.

The analyses presented in the book are regarded as a valuable reference for policymakers, academics and students. In particular, topics such as the revitalisation of NATO, China's geopolitical manoeuvres and Russia's foreign policy have the potential to significantly impact future policy decisions for those working in the fields of international security and diplomacy.

*Trends and Transformations in World Politics* has the potential to become a significant reference point for future research. In particular, areas such as the role of international organisations in world politics and the impact of new technologies like cybersecurity and artificial intelligence on international relations require further investigation. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of alternative IR theories, such as social constructivism, critical theory and postcolonial approaches, in conjunction with the utilisation of empirical data, can facilitate a more holistic understanding of the transformations in world politics.

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